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INFLUENCE

O F A

CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR,

In drawing

Dead Sinners to himself,

Represented in a

S E R M O N

Preached at the Celebration of the LORD'S
SUPPER, in the Presbyterian Meeting of
DISSENTERS, without SALLY PORT.

JOHN xii. 32, 33.

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men
unto me, (this he said, signifying what death he should die.)*

By JOHN BAILLIE.

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NEWSCATLE UPON TYNE:

Printed by T. SAINT, in Pilgrim-street.

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*To the Congregation of Presbyterian Dissenters
without Sally Port, and others in Communion
with us in the other towns in England.*

My Dear Friends,

YOUR edification, as in duty bound by solemn engagements, ought to be the point where all our labours center. And as every Christian society generally profess submission to some stated rules, it is but just and proper, that you should have clear views of the principles which you profess, judging with precision wherein they coincide with, or differ from the great variety of Christian societies which compose the dissenting interest in England; to this I have frequently been solicited by some of yourselves, desiring that I would publish the terms of our communion, which I always propose on the evening preceding the celebration of the Lord's supper among us. Were our situation in any part in Scotland, a publication of this kind would only be losing time, as our principles have there been long ago universally known; but as in this, and in other places in England in communion with us, they may be, and really are, maliciously misrepresented in anonymous pamphlets, and thereby some may hesitate about their propriety and divine authority, self-defence, and what is incomparably more precious, vindication of the truth, seem to call upon me to state them clearly and succinctly before the public.

Without therefore drawing any comparisons betwixt us and others, I shall shortly lay before you, an account of our constitution and Christian practice, and then let every person judge for himself. What most peculiarly then characterises us, is, an inviolable attachment to the

presbyterian form of church-government, founded upon the New Testament, and arranged under distinct heads in the confession of faith, which was solemnly adopted as the scripture-scheme of doctrine, discipline, and government, by the church in England and Scotland in its purest times. You will easily join with me in detesting the opinion, that the Blessed Head, who with composure settled all the concerns of his church immediately before he left the world, and yet left the form and order of his house to be modelled by the capricious wills of men. No; he was too well acquainted with the seeds of ambition that are sown in every heart, and are prone to flourish in them especially, who, in point of office, are placed above their brethren, not to fix unalterably, the order and government of his church in all ages. Even in the days of his flesh he saw a strong desire for superiority arising among his disciples, which he severely checked, and with which he was highly offended. The Christian church, however, was in some respects different in point of form, during our Lord's personal presence, from what it was after his ascension; for while they had their master as a living oracle to consult in every case, there was no occasion for any deliberations among themselves; but when he was taken off their head, there was another comforter sent to preside in the church, who, by a copious effusion of the graces of knowledge, faith, fortitude, and love, qualified the Apostles for prescribing the form, order, and discipline of the Christian church, to which it strictly adhered during the ages of inspiration: and certainly the language of the Holy Spirit to succeeding periods is, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." If then it has been in all nations accounted treason to attempt a subversion of the established civil govern-

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government, of how much forer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who with daring hands, attempt to undermine the heavenly fabrick of the church of Christ!

Awed by such a solemn consideration, holy men, in all ages, deaf to the calls of interest and ambition, and undismayed at the fiery terrors of Rome, have been stirred up to maintain that beautiful primitive order in the church, and have been faithful in making known to their succeeding offspring this law and testimony established among our fathers. At the reformation, when Scotland, with unexampled boldness, burst these heavy chains of Romish tyranny, under which they had groaned for many ages, the church there, after various and long deliberations about the mind of the Holy Ghost respecting the standard truths of religion in the scriptures, at last agreed to that system for doctrine, order, and government, which the church of Scotland PRO-FESSES to this day. To that system and form we, in baptismal, and other vows, solemnly engaged to adhere. To revile us and the church of Scotland, for subscribing to these articles, when we approve of them, as either express scripture, or containing doctrines evidently deducible from it, is generally the practice of those who, instead of giving us better in their stead, often inculcate doctrines of the most dangerous nature; and indeed this objection has never had any weight with the truly serious.

It would be improper in an address of this kind to describe at any length the many excellent advantages of this form and order, in which, we think, is contained the mind of Christ; and, indeed, it is with peculiar pleasure I add, that what I might do in this matter is altogether superceded by my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Hall of London, in a work, intituled, *A Scriptural View*

of the Gospel Church, in which its constitution, order, discipline, and fellowship are ascertained from the New Testament in a masterly and convincing manner.

Permit me only to add, however, that as strifes, animosities, and even grosser crimes, sometimes break out among professing Christians (not arising from thy doctrines, O Prince of Peace! but from the lusts that war within) I shall shortly sketch out the remedy which the church has prescribed to remove these offences, and re-unite its members in the amiable bonds of forbearance and love.

The radical court in presbytery is the session, consisting of the minister *ex officio*, and the elders who had been invested with their office, in consequence of the choice of the people, and their solemn admission to that office by the pastor. The justice and equity in the constitution of this court evidently appears from this, that every member of the society is tried by his peers or equals, whom he himself had nominated to a share in the government in the church; this form of representation is so truly excellent, that Great Britain, the most admirably constituted state on earth, has adopted the same plan in her civil government.

But I must confess, that where a minister chooses his elders himself, or where the session adds to their number by their own private choice, without the election of the whole body, is as unfair and blameable as it would be for the House of Commons to promote whom they pleased to the dignity of members, without the electors and freeholders ever having been consulted, or their voices asked.

I maintain that a legal session is only such where the whole body have been the constituents, and no otherwise. Before this court every member has a right to

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table his cause, having first carefully taken the necessary steps prescribed at length by our Lord in *Matth. xviii. 15.* for removing the offences privately betwixt him and his injurious brother; this having been ineffectual, parties are summoned, and, in their hearing, the cause is tried: But, should the matter appear intricate, the members, in order to have more advice, can remove it to a higher court, consisting of several representatives of other congregations; this is called a presbytery: Or should one of the parties think that he is injured by the decision of the session, he can at once carry the matter before the presbytery by appeal, where the session are obliged to answer for their proceedings. This power of appealing has been a proper and necessary check upon sessions where parties may sometimes be shamefully formed, and so innocency suffer without being permitted a hearing. Even from the presbytery, appeals can be carried before the representatives of the whole church, under the name of general council, assembly, or synod. This is the presbyterian plan of church government, which, abstracting from its divine institution, seems to excel all others for the purposes of redressing grievances, repressing violence and wrongs, and maintaining the inestimable right of religious liberty. Against this constitution it can have no greater weight to alledge, that because in a church so constituted variance and strifes sometimes happen, while other churches who have no government at all, are peaceable and charitable; then, if one was to advance, that because the Hottentots are just and chaste, therefore the British constitution is nothing preferable to theirs, since the opposite vices are too often found among us.

This, my brethren, is the constitution of the church of Scotland, and it is yours; and you know that we
even

even of this place have often experienced its salutary effects, by the frequent references which we have made to superior courts, who always sent us decisions so equitable and so prudent, as gave us the greatest satisfaction: and I may truly affirm, that to maintain this form of government in its purity, was one of the principal reasons that influenced our synod to comply with the calls from those congregations in England in connection with us, and settling fixed pastors among them; for I will be bold to affirm, that neither numbers, convenience, nor worldly advantages could be their motive, since for many years they have always had more calls from numerous and substantial congregations in Scotland, than they had young men to settle amongst them. I will likewise declare, that a settlement in England was neither mine nor my brethren's personal choice, and that nothing but submission to the rules of the church did influence us. And could the dissenting ministers in general be prevailed upon to adopt this New Testament plan of government and discipline in admitting of pastors, choosing of elders, and maintaining due subordination to superior courts, it might then be hoped that discipline would be maintained in its full vigour, and by the blessing of God, pious practice, well-tempered zeal, and holy watchfulness would flourish, when thus secured by this hedge of government; for, indeed, these are plants too delicate to grow in the open field. I live upon the best terms with my dissenting brethren, and therefore would wish to be understood, to speak from a generous concern for the prosperity of the church in general, and in my mind this is the method ever we are to hope for it.

I own it is to be lamented with tears of sorrow, that the established church of Scotland so criminally dishonours the purity of its constitution, which yet every

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member is obliged at his admission, solemnly to profess. The peculiar grievance which good men have long lamented, is lay-patronage, by which any person of property who has the right of presentation in the parish, may thrust in upon them, any candidate for the ministry, however unqualified for that particular charge. It is of little force for the patron to argue, "Why do you Reverend Gentlemen licence a person who is unqualified?" But does he not consider, that as ministers, like others, possess various gifts and endowments, so a minister may be eminently useful in one corner, while in another he might do much hurt. But the most criminal part is, depriving Christians of the precious right of choosing their pastors, whom they judge will be most edifying to them. And mark the unhappy consequences! Large and populous parishes, where religion once flourished under faithful pastors, now fly from their churches as if infected. Scarcely the clerk and beadle attend, while the unfeeling presentee harangues to the solitary walls! I own it diverts me to figure in my own mind what the college of the apostles (were they again on earth) would think, were they happening to see a modern settlement in the church of Scotland; they would probably ask, "What criminal is that, in black, so strongly guarded by musqueteers, and whom all the people seem to regard with abhorrence?" "Criminal!" says one of the crowd, "he is a minister of the gospel of peace, going by the assistance of the cannons and musquets of the Law to take possession of his charge." says Paul, "It must be one of the confederates of the man of sin, about whom I warned the Thessalonians above one thousand seven hundred and thirty years ago, that thus violently destroys the church." "Destroy the church! No. Gentlemen, go forward, you will

" will hear him solemnly declare before God, that no
 " temporal views or motives of interest influenced him
 " to take charge of these people whom you see hook
 " ing him along." " Why, Did these people call him
 " to teach them?" " Oh! No; it was a gentleman
 " who never was in the church in his life, and who
 " does not care if there was not a minister in the island
 " but for certain reasons and services, gave him the pre-
 " sentation; besides the criminal, as you call him, boasts
 " of descending in a direct line from the apostles
 " From us!" they exclaim with indignation, and so
 march off.

I revere the church; it has been a nursery of eminent
 men; and for men of learning and polished manners, I
 believe it is, just now, unequalled in Europe; but I must
 be permitted to mingle my tears with these who in
 silent sorrow lament the pernicious measures followed
 of late years: And whoever would see the fatal ten-
 dency of lay-patronage, will be abundantly convinced by
 perusing an ingenious performance on that subject, in se-
 veral distinct dissertations by a presbyterian minister of
 this place.

No wonder then, that these wounds which the church
 have received in the house of her friends have been sin-
 cerely lamented by worthy and godly men, who are bore
 down by a domineering party, insulting their distress.
 Neither can these tender consciences be blamed, who re-
 fused thus to draw the civil sword, and wound this apo-
 stolic constitution in its vitals; and rather than assist in
 such daring work, they bore the vengeance of their ad-
 versaries, who stripped them of their temporal emolu-
 ments, and endeavoured to destroy their public use-
 fulness, by forbidding them to instruct the people in
 their precious rights which their forefathers had procu-

red at the expence of all that was dear to them in the world. But these faithful men took chearfully the spoiling of their goods, rather than forego the superior blessing of a peaceable conscience, by a steady defence of the truth.

It is then, as Mr Hall, in the book already cited, page 228, proves, that a separation from such violent proceedings is warrantable, nor can it justly incur the censure of schism. And I could name some of the establishment, who, in point of learning and piety, are an ornament to their profession, who have openly declared, that such a separation has been a mean, in the hand of providence, for preserving the doctrines of the gospel, and the original constitution of the church from ruin. But every desirable consequence is to be hoped from the promises of Jehovah Rophi, the Lord the healer, who hath assured us, that men in opposite interests, and inflamed with rancorous animosities, shall yet see eye to eye, and there shall be nothing to hurt or to destroy in all his holy mountain. Every friend of peace and truth therefore, I presume, are, with ardent prayers and longing expectations, waiting for the blessed times when these fatal divisions which wound religion, distress the godly, and confirm the profane in their infidelity, shall be healed.

I own I am a little surprized to find an author (who does not chuse to subscribe his assertions) affirm, "that our community have forsaken the testimony, are become more lukewarm, and are now entire conformists to the times." The charge of moderation, I confess, is new and uncommon, as we have been often accused of conceited precision, seldom before of pliant conformity. If laying aside railing at establishments, revising the laws, and generally on the conclusion of celebrating the Lord's supper, that feast of love, to employ se-

veral hours in inflaming the people's minds with rancour and rage against all who differ from themselves (which was the shameful practice at the separation). I say, if this be lukewarmness, I and all my Reverend Fathers and Brethren readily take with the charge, as we abhor the practice of thus dishonouring the chair of truth. The doctrines of the gospel, teaching men repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; to lead quiet and peaceable lives; and to keep themselves unspotted from the world, are subjects so copious and so necessary, that to illustrate and inforce them sufficiently, employs all our time. But, on the other hand, I presume that every purpose of the testimony first published by the separating brethren, has been in a great measure attained; while in the mean time we wish and pray for nothing more than the closing of these wounds among ourselves, which the pride and passions of men have so fatally opened. Neither can I find in any one page of the testimony, that its authors "denied the PROESSED " religion of the church of Scotland to be the true " religion." The abuse of this profession they lamented, and protested against, but never denied the truths professed. What this Historian's views then must have been by such an assertion, I will not decide, possibly (as he is a man of humour) to make a trial of the credulity of mankind.

Further, you well know our opposition to private baptism, which we dare not presume to dispence to any member till after due intimation is given from the pulpit. This the Confession of Faith strictly enjoins; and indeed this rule seems to be founded on reason, as you know, that even in your own civil societies, that prior to the admission of any member, the body in general must be informed, and their qualifications examined in-ro; much more is this precaution necessary in things of higher concern.

You likewise know, that a faithful and constant observation of worship in your families, is another qualification for church membership among us, together with an uniform attendance upon public ordinances ; well knowing that many a praying person will never go to heaven, but prayerless persons cannot get there.

I have only to add my reasons for publishing the following sermon. I am well aware, that the public will find nothing new in it, but what great and excellent men have advanced before me ; but if I can be the instrument of inducing you, or others, even to read these old truths, and thereby your edification be promoted, my trouble will be abundantly repaid. The stile too which I have used, is of that kind which has a tendency more to elevate the affections than to inculcate doctrinal truths. A distinction which I think necessary to be observed in preparation sermons for receiving the holy communion. You know likewise, that some time ago, the presbytery applied to us, desiring that we would make some small collection for a charity of a very pressing nature, (of which I informed you) I thought that by publishing a sermon, and if there should be by the sale of it any surplus above the bare expence of printing, that we might contribute in this manner to relieve such claimant distreses. If it should, it shall faithfully be applied in this charitable manner.

And now, my brethren, let me take my leave of you at this time by one word of advice : you see now by the conclusion of the year a lively picture of human life, and a solemn admonition to prepare for eternity. It has been the last to many of your acquaintances, now sleeping in the dust, till the heavens and the earth be no more ! It's highly probable many of you will never see another year. What provision for an eternal world have you then made ? For, look all round you, within you, and

and without, you will after the painful search find, that nothing will be a permanent portion but God. This one thing needful can alone bear you up under distress and pain, and afford you a comfortable view of another world. I presume, your daily labours, your personal and family troubles sufficiently convince you that human life is but, at best, vanity and vexation of spirit. The frequent warning you have within you, by pains and distress, are so many friendly hints that death hath begun his work, and is gradually loosening the pins of the tabernacle, till he soon bring you to the house appointed for all living. And will you venture upon the confines of the other world without being acquainted, nay, carrying hostile intentions against the dreadful King who reigns there! Better you had never seen the light, ten thousand times better you never had heard there was a Saviour! O then give yourselves no rest, till you have found a place in your heart by faith, for the reception of him who stands without and knocks; and wait daily about wisdom's gates; that you may learn the language, wear the dress, and secure the favour of the King of that glorious country where weakness and misery cannot enter.

And with yourselves, forget not, at a throne of grace, the precious pledges of your conjugal love; put it in their power by your solemn warnings, your assiduous instructions, and amiable example, to bless God that ever they had such parents. I shall have done with a prayer for you, dictated by the Holy Ghost: "The Lord
 "make you to encrease and abound in love one towards
 "another, and towards all men, even as we do towards
 "you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblame-
 "able in holiness, before God, even our Father, at the
 "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

NEWCASTLE,

Dec. 20, 1772.

T H E

I N F L U E N C E, &c.

J O H N xii. 32, 33.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men after me, (this he said, signifying what death he should die.)

EVER since the morning stars sang together, and the Sons of God shouted for joy at the sight of this earth emerging out of nothing, nature has been pouring forth an endless store of inimitable colours and beauties ; and such a fine effect have they on a contemplative mind, that men of a polished taste, have, in every age, employed eminent masters in the art of painting, to copy nature, and to transfer on canvas, an imitation of these living beauties which clothe the earth with majesty and glory. And it must be confessed, that some masterly hands have been so happy in the execution of some pieces of imitation, as fill us with admiration. But still nature is unrivaled in beauty, for even these pieces of most exquisite art, when viewed through a magnifying medium, they appear a rough indigested heap of broken surfaces ; but nature, the more minutely

nutely she is examined, rises with new beauties to the wondering eye.

And with the same propriety I may add, that although ten thousand pencils dipt in the colours of heaven, have been incessantly employed in drawing the mediatorial beauties of Jesus ; although the eloquence of Angels, the raptures of the prophets, and the affecting descriptions of the ministers of the gospel, have been from age to age labouring to paint out the graces and excellencies of the Redeemer ; yet, all with one voice, conscious of their inequality to the task, cry out, “ But who can speak of all his glory, “ or shew forth all his praise !”

But I may observe, that to a mind that has been stung with a sense of guilt, the Saviour never appears more lovely, than when his head was incircled with his thorny crown, and taken down dead, pale, and lifeless from the cross. It is then that the clamours of conscience are hushed to silence, and joy mingled with admiration, strongly affect the mind.

And when is the time that these dispositions ought more to be cherished, than when at a communion table we celebrate this crowning instance of love which he gave a lost world without the gates of Jerusalem ? And, by divine permission, we are now to be engaged in this heavenly work, and to join in concert with the fair company of the redeemed, in celebrating
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the memorial of his loving kindness, who is fairer than the sons of men, and altogether lovely.

When our Lord spoke the words of the text, he had already finished a great part of the work given him of the Father to do. By a course of the most heavenly actions for thirty-three years, he had magnified the law, and, by his submission, made it honourable. One part, and the hardest too, yet was unfinished, and that was to be baptised in his own blood. That black hour was at hand; the armies of darkness were now rallying their scattered forces to make their last efforts for his destruction; his enemies on earth were hatching midnight schemes for his ruin; the clouds of heaven were lowring, and the thunder of vindictive wrath were ready to burst upon him, and the livid flames of divine vengeance were about to kindle on the devoted sacrifice of his human nature.

Standing on the brink of such a hideous sea of sufferings, he at first seems to recoil at the prospect.—“ Now is my soul troubled, and “ what shall I say ? ” — “ Father, save me from “ this hour.” Did he then repent of the undertaking as rash and inconsiderate? By no means: And therefore taking a fresh draught of the brook of promised help, he takes a second view of the gloomy files of hell, and comparing

paring their respective strength for the engagement, he finds that he is more, infinitely more, than a match for them all; and adds, breathing defiance, and threatening their ruin, "O death I will be thy plagues! O grave I will be thy destruction!" repentance shall be hid "from mine eyes." To this I may add, that the blessed consequences of this encounter, by which the lawful captive should be delivered, and the prey taken from the terrible; that the valley covered with dry bones of dead sinners, should be reanimated, and, together with his dead body, be made alive. I say, these reflections so fill his soul with joy, that he breaks out in the triumphant language in the text, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all Men unto me."

And if it is in consequence of this lifting up of a crucified Redeemer, that we are rescued from the pains of hell, and permitted to sit down at a communion table, which is covered with all the blessings of the new covenant; O my brethren, summon and collect all your attention and thoughts, while I prosecute, by divine assistance, the following point of doctrine, viz. That the dying charms of a crucified Saviour, are the best attractive to draw men from sin and ruin, to Christ and glory.

To illustrate this point, I shall observe the following method:

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I. Describe the nature and manner of this drawing, intimated in the text.

II. Shew how wonderfully a crucified Saviour draws dead sinners.

III. Speak to the conditional means by which this is done.

IV. Apply.

I return to the first of these divisions ; but before I enter more particularly to discuss it, I must premise,

That the term draw supposes opposition and resistance in the party drawn ; and this at once carries us to the prospect of human nature in its fallen state, in which men are carried even to the dreadful length of hating both Christ and his Father ! a charge so black and big with horror, that it were to be wished it could be denied ; but, alas ! it is brought by him who only knows what is in man.

I do not now proceed to open these scenes of misery and guilt, the inseparable attendants on sin. Sufficient is it for us, that the divine testimony concerning man is, " that the whole head is sick, and the heart is faint, there is no soundness." And so little are men disposed to lay hold of heaven and happiness, as offered by Jesus, that their constant reply is, we will have none of thee ; and so little are they able to do this, that Christ expressly says, no

man can come unto me unless the Father which hath sent me draw him. Unless the same almighty arm which will shake the stars of heaven from their orbits, be employed in drawing the sinner, he never will come to Christ.

Weak, however, as we are, yet our unwillingness to come and have life, is principally charged against us by the Lord of life, "ye will not come unto me that you may have life." See here a mournful spectacle indeed, man born for immortality and glory, exposed to the unmixed vials of divine wrath, on account of his alienation from God; the law thunders, hell bellows from beneath, heaven calls, invites, and commands him to escape for his life; but, alas! all in vain; for, as it is affirmed of such as are mortally stung by the Egyptian asp, that they seem as if sunk in a pleasant slumber, from which they are unwilling to awake; in the same manner the sinner seems delighted with his chains, and sees the path to ruin strewed with flowers, and flowing with imaginary joys; till, alas! the fires of Tophet awaken him from the delusory dream when it is too late. But who can limit the power of him who is the resurrection and the life? No, my brethren; for although the general race of men seem to be determined on their ruin, and treat the offers of mercy with scorn and contempt; yet a blessed remnant are
made

made willing in a day of his power. This power of Christ, represented to us under the notion of drawing, I shall now more fully attempt to open, by considering its nature, qualities, and means. And here I observe,

That the drawing spoken of, or that act by which the mighty power of the spirit of Christ operates upon the dead hearts of men, and makes them alive, scatters the seeds of fire in the soul, and kindles in it a holy flame of love to God, is, what cannot, on the principles of reason, be accounted for. Knowest thou, O curious inquirer, the formation and progress of the bones in the womb of her that is with young? much less canst thou comprehend the way of the Spirit. Canst thou investigate the ballancing of the clouds? still less the manner how the Spirit of Christ hushes the jarring passions, and composes to rest the stormy tempest in the soul: And yet to our comfort, although, like the blind man, we cannot account for the manner how he miraculously obtained his sight, yet to his comfort he could say, "This I know, that whereas once I was blind, now I see."

The manner of this operation is two-fold: First, proposing moral means to the understanding; and secondly, employing effectual power upon the will. This a judicious divine illustrates by the expressive, though familiar, allusion to fishing; where, although the prey may

be allured to swallow the baited hook, yet power must be employed by the wary angler to draw it to the bank. In the same manner God in the gospel proposes such ravishing objects to the understanding, as have a tendency to influence the sinner's choice; but even here, the drawing influence of the spirit must be exerted. In doing this, he

1st, Undeceives men as to their state. It's astonishing to consider how artfully the god of this world has varnished over sin; violation of the divine law, so precious in the sight of a Holy God, that sooner than one jot of it should be dishonoured, his own son must perish; this is called liberty. A contempt of the scriptures, these oracles by which we know the mind of God; this is free thinking. The promises of a faithful God, which, as an anchor, keep the soul from foundering in the storms of temptation; yet even these are neglected or misbelieved. In a word, the sinner, like a patient in a brain fever, laughs and sports, and thinks himself in perfect health; while, alas, weeping friends know this to be a prelude to his death. In the same manner, the sinner, in this delirium of the soul, is blessing himself, saying, That he shall have peace; but when it please God to rebuke his distemper, he then sees himself stripped of all these imaginary accomplishments, and looks back with horror at

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the narrow escape from irretrievable perdition.
 " Ah ! where had I been " says he, " had a just
 " and an offended judge cut me off, with all
 " my sins in their vigour !

When the conscience is thus roused, the
 next step of the Holy Spirit is to lead the soul,
 charged and loaded with guilt, to the fountain
 opened to the house of David for sin and for
 uncleanness ; and here these train of crimes,
 red with guilt and black with filth, are washed
 away in this flowing stream. This fountain of
 living water possesses another admirable quality,
 for the penitent, by a draught of it, receives
 such invigorating influence, as by it he grows
 daily in holiness, a love for religion, watchful-
 ness against sin, and a delight in the law of God.

2d, In this dawn of conversion, the joys, bles-
 sings, and solid delights, which are secured in
 the new covenant, are proposed to his view ;
 but all these are eclipsed by the radiant appear-
 ances of the sun of righteousness. This is he
 who is the theme of angels, and the subject of
 the unceasing song of the redeemed, the bright-
 ness of the father's glory, and the express image
 of his person ; who by his interposition hath
 supported the pillars of the earth from being
 dissolved by the curse, and who, by erecting a
 bloody standard, hath collected the out-casts of
 Israel into one. To the smell, the myrrh, aloes,
 and cassia out of his ivory chambers, regale the
 soul,

soul, and breathe strong of heaven; to the sight, how ravishing! altogether lovely, and fairer than the children of men; to the hearing, what sounds must these be that can charm away the pains of death, and soothe the anguish of the dying! a voice so enchanting as to recal blindfolded sinners from the verge of hell to the heights of glory and happiness.

Along with Jesus, the Father also freely offers all things; a kingdom, a throne, a guard of angels, possession of the city whose gates are adorned with twelve manner of pearls, and whose streets are paved with gold; here, too, the blessed inhabitants are eternally feasted with the juice of that vine, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; no voice of sorrow there bursts from the burthened heart, no tear streams from the afflicted eye, all is peace, joy, and uninterrupted blessedness.

But even these moral means, by which God allures sinners, will not, however charming and heavenly, effectually draw them; and this takes its arise from two causes. The first of which is, the numerous enemies that resist the grace of God in the heart; and the other is, the absolute weakness in the sinner to oppose such mighty powers. But when it pleases God to perfect his strength in weakness, he sends, cloathed in might and power, that same spirit which raised Jesus from the dead; whose genial influences,

ences, brooding over the dead soul of the sinner, create it again in Christ Jesus ; and so supernatural is it, that it is called a creation, and a resurrection from the worst kind of deaths.

Further, the arm of the Lord is revealed in taking away all resisting power in the sinner, by removing the stony heart in the will, by pulling off the veil that is on the understanding, and changing the whole bent of the affections. Here the Father makes haste, mercy flies upon the rapid wings of love ; and, indeed, did it wait for the sinner's return to him, all hopes of salvation would be lost for ever. This makes the apostle observe with admiration, God who is rich in mercy, for the love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.

And yet this power, how strong and effectual soever it may be, yet it cannot justly be called compulsion or force ; for these captives are made willing in a day of power. Hear how the spouse expresses it, My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

There is still something more to be considered here, worth notice, and that is, that this drawing is generally suited to the situation and turn of mind in the person drawn, which *Hosea* ii. 4. seems to allude to, I drew them with the cords of a man, and the bands of love, viz. by

by a rational conviction of their judgments, and a sweet engagement of their affections ; here, indeed, the wisdom of Christ eminently appears.

1. In the means employed ; and these are often accommodated to the employment of the object of his grace. Moses, who had forgotten the glitter of courts, and the deceitful pomp of royalty, had long been accustomed to the mountains and woods of Midian, has an amazing manifestation of the divine presence in a bush burning with fire ; to the Eastern Magi or wise men, acquainted with the motions of the planets, he appears by a star ; to Peter, who possibly before knew little more than the nets he drew, the divine sovereignty appears in a miraculous draught of fishes.

2. The wisdom of Christ, however, is shewn as strongly in over-ruling the designs of men, and apprehending them when their views were very opposite. Thus when Saul, going to Damascus, was thirsting for a banquet of blood, Christ gets before him, and writes out a commission for him to heal these very hearts he had wounded by his relentless persecution. Matthew the publican, that morn of his conversion, probably was thinking of nothing but of accounts and taxes ; but Jesus comes and lays him under an eternal tribute to free grace. But I must also add,

3. That in all these means, there is one fit word.

word, like a chosen arrow, which Christ makes use of to reach conviction to the heart. Witness the disciples going to Emaus.—“ O fools, and “ slow of heart to believe all that the prophets “ have written, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” These words kindle a holy flame in their enraptured minds. Follow me, said he to Matthew, and heaven was in that word; to the woman of Samaria, “ I that speak unto “ thee am he;” and immediately she goes away declaring the joyful tidings to her townsmen; and what I have often thought very remarkable, Stephen preaches a long and a rousing sermon to the impenitent Jews, while a heavenly radiance glowed in his face; but see! the arm of the Lord is not yet revealed, and therefore they were cut to the heart, and, as if possessed with demons, howling with madness and rage, they stone the preacher to death. Peter, a little before, had preached in almost the same words, and three thousand are made willing captives, crying out with holy concern, “ What shall we “ do to be saved?” So much for the nature of, and means employed in this drawing. I pass over the second head of method altogether, and go on to the

III. Which was to speak to the condition on which Christ grounds his assertion; and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men. But even on

this part of the subject, important as it is, I must be short, that I do not unfit your minds for the principal part of the work of the day: But in general I may observe, that the drawing of sinners is founded on his dying on the cross; and one reason may be, 1. That an attentive mind, considering the whole transaction from the first dawn of hope given in that all comprehensive promise, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," to the the finishing of redemption without the gates of Jerusalem, he pauses, and questions with solemn surprize with himself—whence all this!—a life of woes to him who had done no violence!—a sword of vengeance sheathed in the man who is God's fellow!—what groans and lamentations from the lips of the purest innocence!—"my heart is melted as the wax,—the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirits!"—whence all this? It's his own free, uninfluenced love to lost and undone man; that brought him from a throne to expire upon a cross, and to be numbered with the dead! O amazing! for sinners! for me! This fixes the soul so absolutely in admiration, and the beams of beauty from the wounds of a crucified Saviour, have such invincible charms, that (as Dr Owen justly observes) it is completely ravished. And so far is the Christian from being ashamed of the cross,

cross, that, like the Apostle Paul, he disdains to set any object whatever in competition with it, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Lord Jesus Christ, and him crucified! But I must observe, 2. That a view by faith of a crucified Saviour, hath a transforming influence on the soul. The sins and lusts which were the cause of all these woes to its blessed Redeemer, make it to hold them in abhorrence. Never was there a better expedient for the mortification of sin, than a serious view of its consequences in Christ; this makes the Apostle say, "I am crucified with Christ;" and every believer makes it his constant endeavour to have his old man, that is his unrenowned nature, crucified with Jesus. This is preparative to a step still higher, and that is, 3. That the soul, by beholding this transporting sight, not only mortifies sin, but is strongly attracted to follow Christ to where he is in glory; this engages the believer to acquire a moral meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light; and this he cannot do better, than by following the steps of such a glorious forerunner;—from a cross he descended to the grave, from thence he was raised by the mighty power of the Spirit of holiness, and there he left all the grave-clothes of his imperfections, and ascended to the mansions of glory and blessedness: Through much weakness, and with unequal steps

steps indeed, the believer follows Christ in uniform progress, by the encreasing vigour of his faith, and ardency of desires to be with Christ, where he is to behold his glory, not for a few delightful moments, as here ; but what completes happiness, and is the heaven of heavens, “ to be ever with the Lord !”

Thus I have shewn the means and the gradual progress of a spiritual life, by the drawing influence of a crucified Saviour. I shall now conclude with some improvement.

1. Is the preaching of the cross then the only device which God blesses with success in drawing dead sinners to himself? then it's vain, and dangerous too, to attempt any other method. No, neither the law with all its thunders, nor even the gospel in all its beauties, in the letter of it, will awaken the flumbering soul and bring men to Christ. Nothing but his own powerful influence will do this mighty work. Ministers of the gospel are commanded “ to prophecy over “ the dry bones ;” but it's the powerful spirit of Christ, that by breathing on the bones communicates life, and animates them with vigour; but let never this consideration make ministers or people relax in their respective duties, but still be waiting about the gates of wisdom's house, for never any of the house of Jacob sought his face in vain.

2. See how well Jesus is qualified for drawing
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ing finners, he is white and ruddy, white in his Deity, and ruddy in his suffering humanity; he tabernacled with men, and they beheld his glory, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This admirable union of the divine and human natures, constitute Jesus the fittest person to bring many sons unto glory; and he the heir of all things only has a right to say to his faithful followers, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Hear how Mr Rutherford expresses it. "To answer all the ends of his mediation, he must be endued with all the organs, as well as the qualities of the nature of man; he must have a man's heart and bowels to pity man; he must have a man's hands, to touch and cleanse the leper's skin; a man's tongue, to pray for and preach to man; a man's feet, to travel over the mountains, and bring back the strayed sheep. To shew his relation to us still nearer, he would honour the womb of a sinner to bear him, and the breast of a sinner to give him suck; he eat and drank with sinners, and died betwixt two; O wonderful love, which death and the grave could not extinguish! And now, my brethren, although he cannot now shed tears of sorrow, yet his regard is noways lessened when come into his kingdom, and he has sent the Spirit to tell us so."

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These are plain but comfortable words ; and although such who know not the subject of them, may laugh at them, yet I hope better things of you.

3. See how faithful Jesus hath performed what he so comfortably promised, " I will draw men " unto me." As the sun hath exhaled the drops of dew as well from the inhospitable desert, as from the fruitful field, so hath this Sun of Righteousness, when lifted up, drawn admirers and followers from all the ends of the earth, from thrones, and from cottages ; from solitary wastes and crowded cities. With admiring eyes here you see the savage Scythian and the polished European, the learned Jew and the eloquent Greek, fixed in the admiration at this wonderful sight, a God manifested in the flesh, and that sacred flesh mangled on a cross ! A sight so admirable, that angels who bend with prying earnestness from their thrones, must be struck with wonder at such who see no comeliness in him wherefore he should be desired.

Let me, 4thly, Address such persons, if there are such within these walls : And O, may he who hath the key of David, with which he hath already opened millions of locked hearts, give entrance to a serious expostulation with such self-destroyers.

I presume then, my friends, that you will be candid enough to own, that your immortal spi-

its are thinking substances, and that conscience
 is not always asleep. Your moments of reflection
 were occasioned, possibly, by the miserable
 or sudden deaths of some of your thoughtless
 companions. You saw the dying man pushed
 to the brink of eternity, filled with terror at the
 dreadful prospect before him, all black and terrible!
 Ah, how he lays about him and calls
 for help! but, alas, it's too, too late! and in a
 deep groan expires! You left the dreadful scene,
 and formed within yourself a transient resolution
 to reform, that you may die the death of the
 righteous; but the impression gradually wore
 off, till you was at last ashamed of being so
 weak, and now are just the same person as ever.
 On some occasions, as possibly here to-day, you
 have accidentally popp'd into an assembly of
 God's people, where you heard the misery of
 unrenewed nature, and the never-failing cure
 of a Redeemer's blood set forth; you saw the
 charms of holiness, the peace and hope with
 which it fortifies the heart described; you retired,
 saying, Let my latter end be like this
 holy man's! but this goodness was like the early
 dew before the sun beams, it soon vanished.—
 Well, but let me tell you those reflections and
 remonstrances of conscience which you have
 stifled, will only be like covering up glowing
 embers, which will unexpectedly blaze out with
 double fury. Believe me, all the admonitions
 you have heard, all the awakenings of conscience
 you

you have felt : these, like a black army of enraged ghosts, will surround you in the dark hour of death. Will your self-deceit, and false courage then bear you out, and enable you to brave the fury of an angry God, as you have despised his gospel, and trampled upon his laws? How do you propose to bear up under seas of wrath, and be perpetually sinking down, down a horrid depth, in boundless, bottomless, shoreless misery!

When the powers of your souls will be enlarged and invigorated, to contain the vials of fury of an affronted judge! O dreadful thought! let me now turn from the horrid subject, and beseech you by all that you hold precious, to seize the golden season of making peace while you are yet in the way. You have been hearing that to atone for such sinners as you, Jesus was lifted up upon a cross; to wash such polluted souls as yours, his blood flowed in copious streams; O then, neglect not so great, so free, and so suitable a salvation as is here offered to all without exception. Then, having Christ, you shall have all things; then you will experience that calm serenity within, to which the riotous voluptuary is a stranger; and when the calamities of life and approach of death, which makes nobility to hang down its head in foreboding anguish, will come, they shall find you well prepared, and like a wall of brass, to receive their assaults. Every trial in providence shall

be so sanctified to you, as you will find yourself daily ripening for heaven and glory. What say you to these things? Is the language of your thoughts "O happy the man that is in such a case!" but a fearful consciousness of my former undutiful conduct so fills me with dread that I am afraid the merciful time of my visitation is gone! O sinner, think for a moment what these stars, with which Christ hath planted the heavens, once were! Hear what loud notes from him of Tarsus, whose hands were stained with the blood of Christ's infant church, "I was a blasphemer! injurious, &c. but I obtained mercy." Among the blessed company, see Manasseh and Mary Magdalene, names infamous for whatever could deform and ruin human nature. After these, and ten thousand more, limit if you can the grace and power of him who thus is able to save unto the uttermost; measure, if you can, the extent of that declaration, the blood of Christ Jesus, his son, "cleanseth us from all sin!"—Comfortable words! let them close my discourse, let them hang on our dying lips, and O Eternal Spirit, let them be engraven on the tables of our hearts as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond! *Amen.*

